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PROGRAM

ABC World News Tonight

STATION

WJLA-TV
ABC Network

DATE

September 18, 1980 7:00 PM

CITY

Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT

Possible Soviet SALT Violation

FRANK REYNOLDS: ABC News Pentagon correspondent John McWethy has a report about another possible Soviet violation of another Soviet-American agreement.

JOHN MCWETHY: Allegations were made today to ABC News that the Soviet Union has grossly violated terms of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty -- SALT II, a document that was signed by President Carter.

The charges were made by Congressman Robin Beard, a member of the House Armed Services Committee. Beard is a Republican and a strong supporter of Ronald Reagan.

REPRESENTATIVE ROBIN BEARD: My sources tell me that the Soviet Union recently, in the last several weeks, participated in an exercise rehearsing their rapid reloading techniques and capabilities for the SS-18 missile.

This is a violation of the intent of SALT I, which states that rapid reloading of missiles will be prohibited. There's very specific language in SALT II stating that this will be disallowed.

MCWETHY: Sources within the government confirm that the Soviets did run such an exercise, but questioned whether it violates the treaty. The SALT II Treaty specifically forbids either side from bringing spare missiles to launch sites. It also prohibits from developing, testing, or deploying systems for rapid reloading of ICBM launchers.

The reason, to prevent both countries from being able to fire one round of nuclear missiles and to then